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DECEMBER 11, 2010

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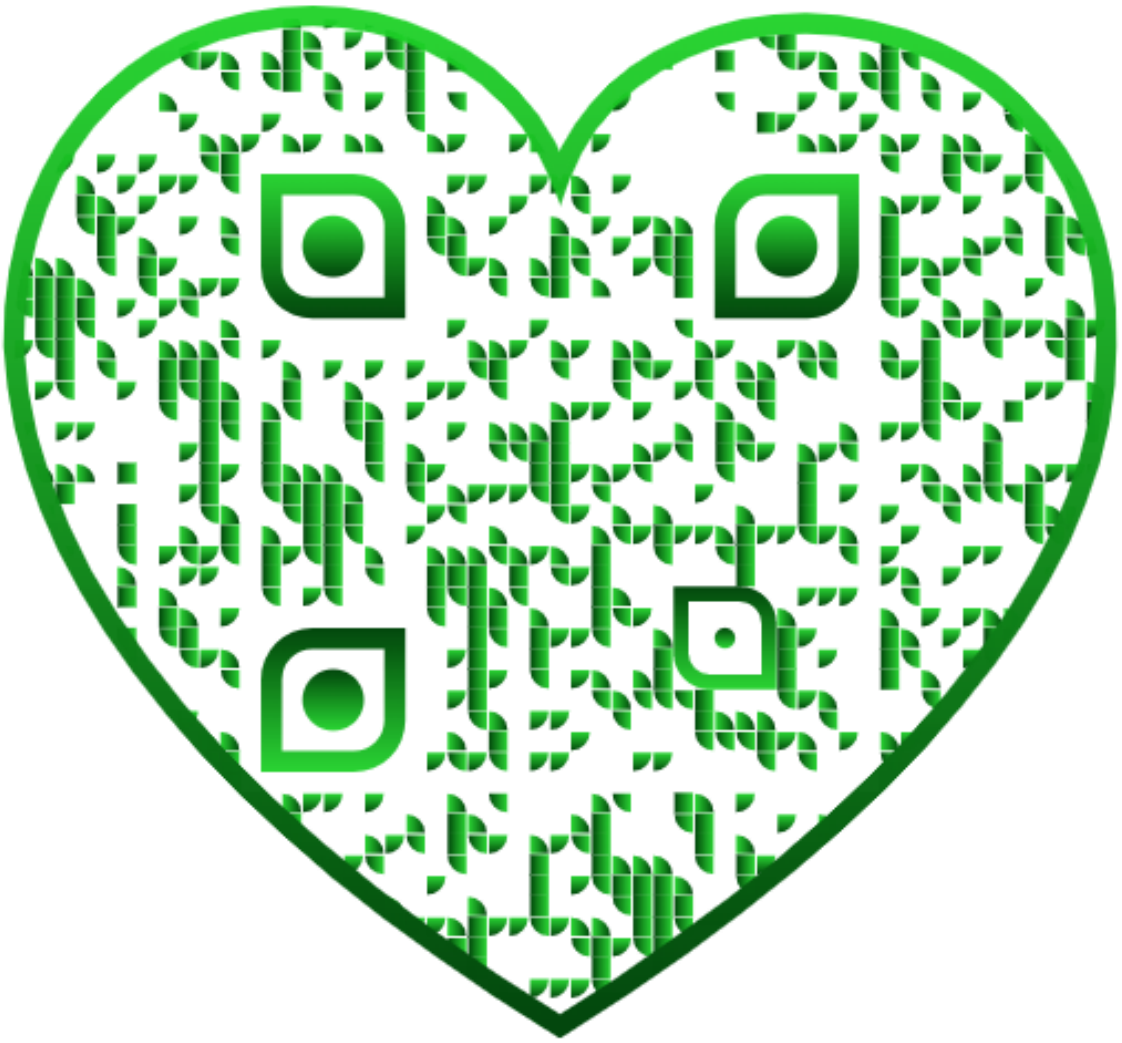

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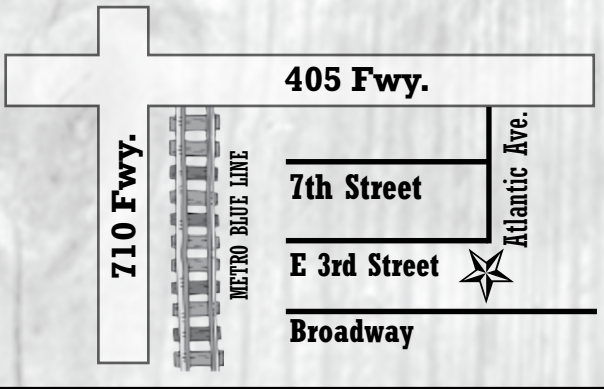

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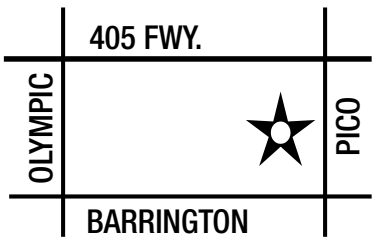

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Volume 3 Number 4, Nov.-Dec. 2010

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Record Collector News
827 Hollywood Way #233
Burbank, CA 91505

Published bi-monthly.

Check us out on the internets at
www.recordcollectornews.com

"Without music, life would be a mistake."
–Friedrich Nietzsche

Record Collector News
Serving Record Collectors World Wide and Beyond.

Distributed FREE at record stores and conventions in California, the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest, and Vegas, Baby.

Subscriptions are available by first class mail. Six issues, $18.00. (Canada/Mexico, $24, all other countries $30). Record Collector News. 827 Hollywood Way #233, Burbank, CA 91505. 818-209-5685.

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Bob Dylan: Courtesy of Sony/Don Hunstein

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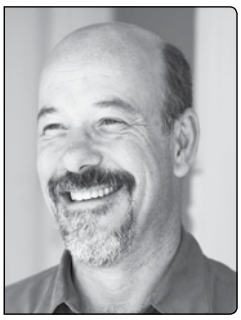
BONUS TRACKS

Los Lobos, Elvis, Yes on Prop 19



THE RETURN OF THE WEST SIDE RECORD SHOW

We had so much fun at the West Side Record Show in August that we decided to DO IT AGAIN. That's right, it's ON! All 49 tables are pretty much sold out at the time of this writing, but you can get on the waiting list. The date is Saturday December 11. Same location: The Culver City Veterans' Memorial Complex Teen Center, 4117 Overland Avenue. For info email jim@recordcollectornews.com.

THE POLITICS OF RECORD COLLECTING

Discussing politics in the pages of Record Collector News makes no sense. So here it goes anyway; Marijuana has done as much to help sell records, 8 track and 4 track tapes, cassettes, CDs and downloads, as have the Beatles. Okay, maybe not the Beatles, but you know what I mean. So here you go, a political endorsement: Please support your local record store – vote YES on Prop 19, the Marijuana Legalization Initiative.

NEW STUFF – REISSUES – ETC

Columbia/Legacy has released Bob Dylan's first eight LPs in a box set titled *Bob Dylan – The Original Mono Recordings*. The box set is available on CD and 180 gram vinyl and reproduced from first generation monaural mixes. The booklet, packaging and photos are fantastic.

Listening to these masterpieces in mono, as the artist originally intended, is so much more satisfying than the stereo mixes. The sound seems less complicated and more, fun in mono. I went through my Dylan records to see if I had any of the original mono LPs – just to compare. I did have a few, but not all, and they were semi-to-pretty-thrashed. I think I'm gonna have to go out and get both the CD and vinyl formats. I mean, we're talking about Bob Dylan's first eight albums – some of the most important recorded music of the 20th century.

THE HIGHWAYMEN

The Essential Highwaymen on Columbia/Legacy.

This compilation featuring Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash,

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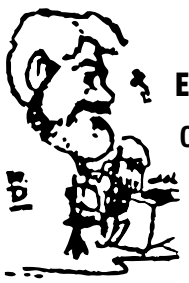

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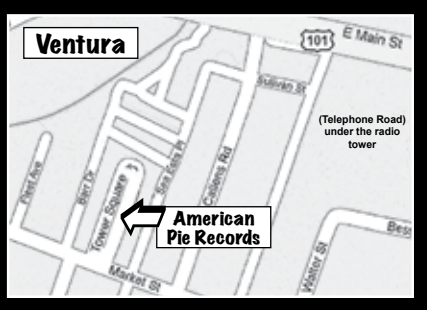

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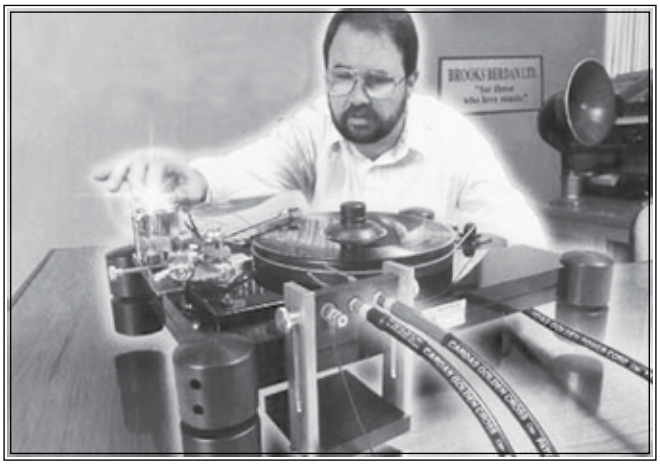

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continued

Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson has 38 songs that, in a way, compliment the Dylan box. Between the Highwaymen and Dylan, you've got some serious songwriting. "Essential" says it all.

VIVA ELVIS

Legacy Recordings in cooperation with Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. and Viva ELVIS by Cirque du Soleil at ARIA Resort and Casino in Las Vegas announce the release of *Viva Elvis*, the album. It's the soundtrack from the awesome Cirque du Soleil show in Vegas. I loved it. Just a great mash up of Elvis, early, middle and late in his career. Great fun.

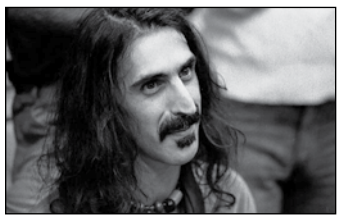
LOS LOBOS

Los Lobos Tin Can Trust on Shout!Factory records is possibly my favorite new CD of the year. In my humble opinion and to my own personal ears, the two best, most important bands to come out of LA were Frank Zappa and every band he ever played with, and Los Lobos. Los Lobos' career goes back farther then I want to count. Starting out as teens playing dances in East LA these guys have evolved and changed and stayed the same somehow. I think the thing that has provided continuity is that they are such great musicians. The playing and vocals are as good as it gets. The styles are varied and mashed. The job they do in the studio is top notch, especially on this CD. And live they can rock pretty much any size house. But ultimately, the thing that kills me about Los Lobos is Steve Berlin's horns. Especially live. I had the good fortune to attend the free in-store they did at Amoeba Hollywood some weeks ago and they played an amazing set. Berlin killed me. I wanted some tuba though. The CD sounds great. I thought I heard they were releasing it on LP but I haven't been able to find it... Too bad because this is music I want on all formats.

THIS AND THAT

Our friend, Patrick Campbell-Lyons of Nirvana UK fame, (see *Record Collector News* issue Jan/Feb 2010 article by Robbie Russell) has his own release out in the US called *The 13 Dali's* on Global Recording Artists available at www.gragroup.com. Sliante, Patrick!

Rumor has it that MOJO magazine is doing their entire November MOJO CLASSIC ULTIMATE COLLECTORS ISSUE devoted entirely to Frank Zappa. What a great idea! —Peace



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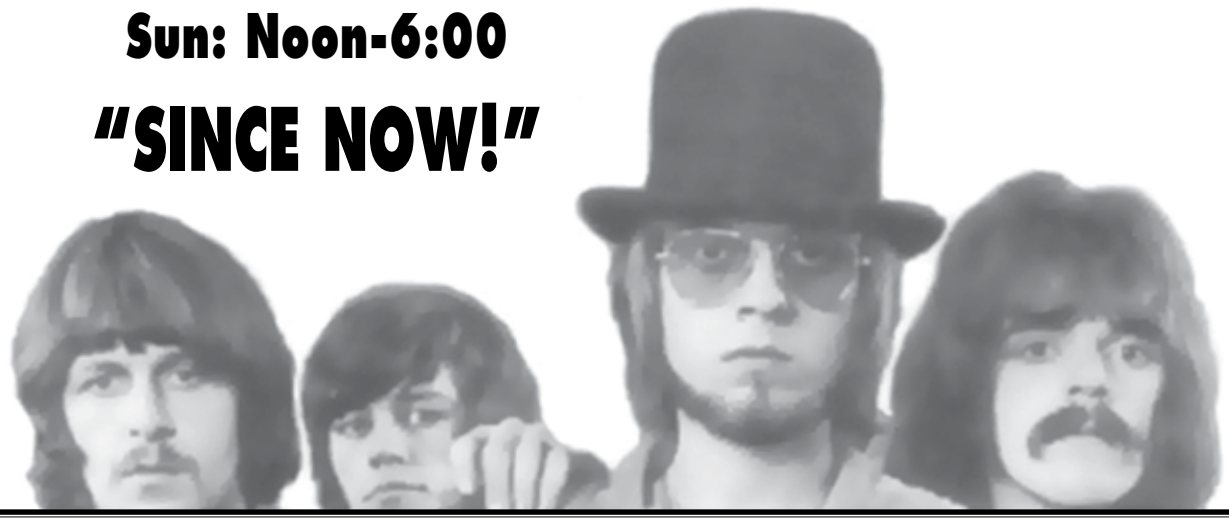
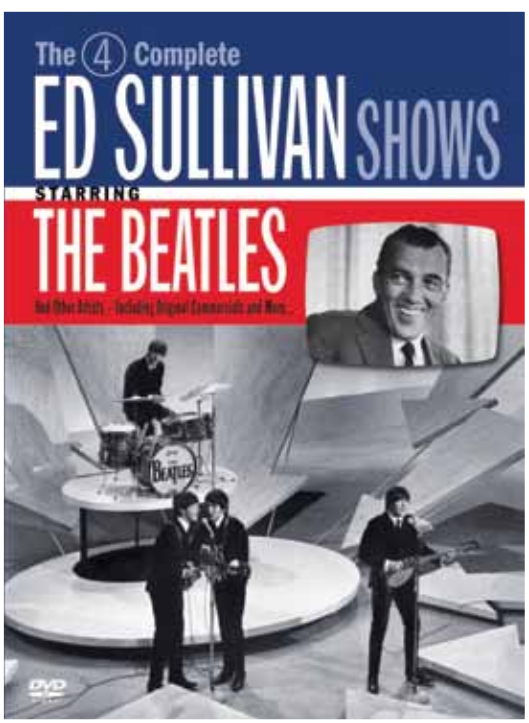


RED AND BLUE THE BEATLES

TWO SEMINAL ALBUMS GET A NEW CD RELEASE; PLUS iTUNES AND THE ED SULLIVAN SHOWS ON DVD

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK



Apple Corps Ltd. and EMI Music in mid-October released The Beatles' original 1973 compilations, 1962-1966 ('Red') and 1967-1970 ('Blue') that have been digitally remastered for CD configuration.

Both 2CD packages include expanded booklets with original liner notes, newly written essays by Bill Flanagan, and rare photos.

Red and *Blue* were the first Beatles compilations to be released after the group's 1970 disbandment. The "Red" and "Blue" collections each spotlight a selection of singles and album tracks written by the band's members. www.thebeatles.com

The *Red* and *Blue* albums have been remastered by the same dedicated team of engineers at EMI Music's Abbey Road Studios responsible for remastering The Beatles' original UK studio albums, carefully maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the original analogue recordings. The result is the highest fidelity the catalogue and these *Red* and *Blue* units has seen since its original release.

Technically, these new Beatles' discs commenced with an extensive period conducting tests before finally copying the analogue master tapes into the digital medium. When this task was completed, the transfer was achieved using a Pro Tools workstation operating at 24 bit 192 kHz resolution via a Prism A-D converter. In addition, de-noising technology, which is often associated with re-mastering, was to be utilized, but only sparingly. As the mastering stage emerged, early vinyl pressings along with existing CD's were loaded into Pro Tools, thus allowing comparisons to be made with the original master tapes during the equalization process.

In 2009, I asked engineer Allan Rouse, who is based at Abbey Road in England, about the just-issued Beatles' projects he has worked on and assembled.

"By the time I started copying The Beatles' tapes, Abbey Road was already able to sync two 24 track analogue machines together and also had 24 and 32 track digital machines. When I started copying their four and eight track tapes and was able to isolate the different tracks I was astonished at what they had been able to achieve, particularly when they started bouncing down (mixing) four tracks to another four track tape to allow them to do overdubs. In particular I think it illustrates the skills of the engineers and George Martin. The other thing that I remember vividly was isolating the vocal tracks; it was remarkable to listen to their unaccompanied voices, be it solo or as a group." **continued**

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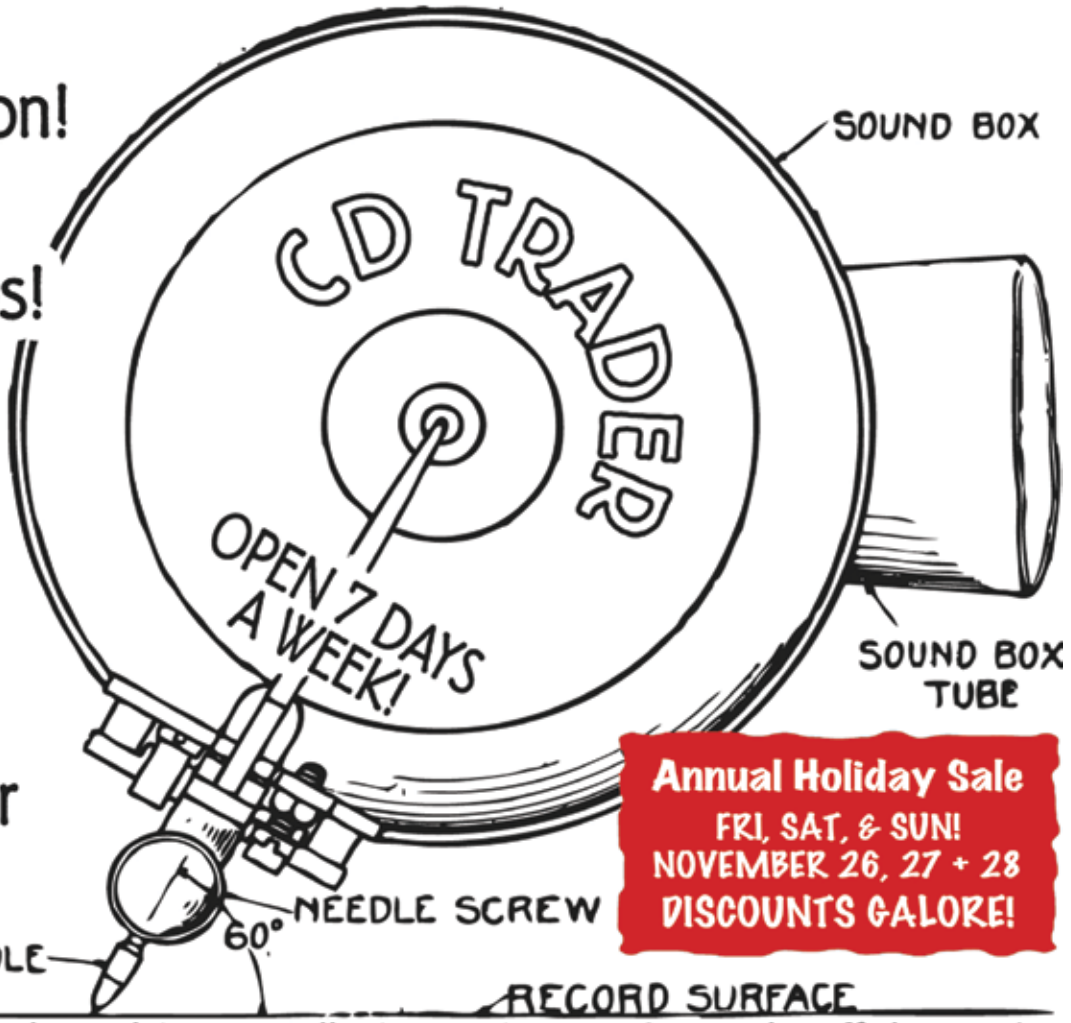

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Journalist and musician Gary Pig Gold launched Canada's very first music fanzine, *The Pig Paper*. His widely syndicated "Pigshit" column has just now entered its third decade of publication.

At age eight in the Toronto suburbs of 1963, Gold then discovered the Capitol Records Canada LP only, *Beatlemania! With The Beatles*.

"In 1973," Gold remembers, "we already had the *White*, as the top-selling song that less-than-fab year was 'Tie A Yellow Ribbon' after all. "Fortunately, along came the *Red* and the *Blue* to rescue us with those first (authorized) Beatles compilations, lovingly packaged within striking, forever-smiling Before (63) and Long After (69) images from the EMI House stairwell itself.

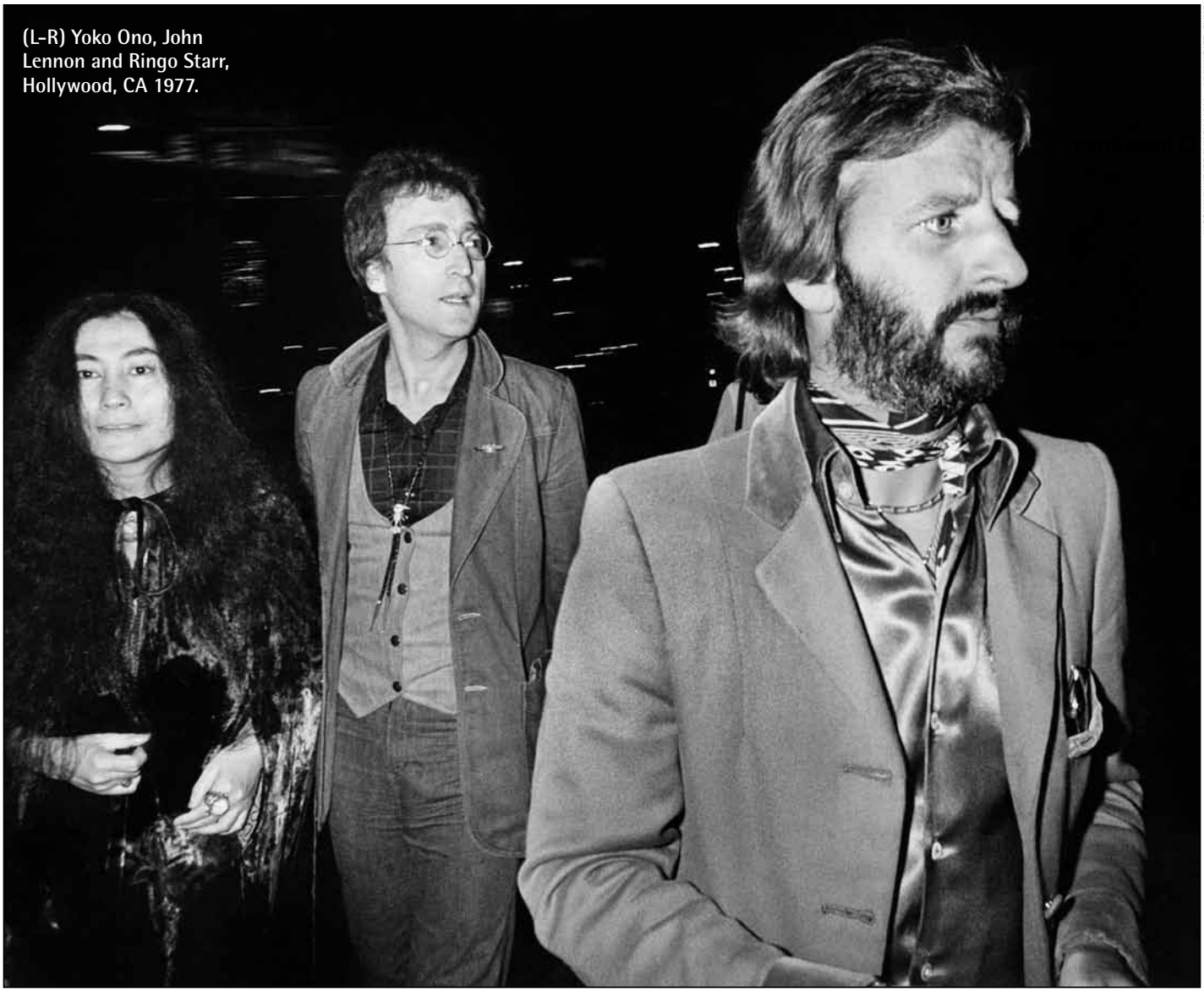
"And inside sat fifty-four classics, 'Love Me Do' straight through 'The Long And Winding Road,' which, although each already permanently imbedded upon our socio-musical DNA, now sound as gear as ever in their newly remastered state. "Yes, these are The Beatles as first heard by all those originally late to the party; who either by age or income bracket missed the real Sixties deal as it was all happening, baby. As such, the *Red* and the *Blue* are absolutely essential touchstones to both an era and a legacy that, while only four mere digital discs long, stretches infinitely into our sonic futures and well beyond.

"Long Live The Fantastic Beatles!" Richard Bosworth, is a veteran music producer and engineer, who in late 2010, supervised the mastering as well as produced the digital releases of Sky's *Don't Hold Back*, and the second album, *Sailor's Delight* Both discs were originally produced by Jimmy Miller (Rolling Stones, Traffic), and were the debut recordings of Sky with Beatles fan and future Knack co-founder and singer/songwriter, Doug Fieger. Bosworth produced a Knack album as well.

In 1991, Bosworth oversaw a 1991 Hollies recording session at Abbey Road Studio and discloses one reason why the Beatles' recordings, particularly their vocals, have sounded so good on record since 1963.

"Norman Smith the first engineer helped make them a hit. Regardless of his age at the time he was a young engineer. Not a long term staff guy at the Abbey Road who happened to come along in an era and started doing things like closer microphone placements for

continued



(L-R) Yoko Ono, John Lennon and Ringo Starr, Hollywood, CA 1977.

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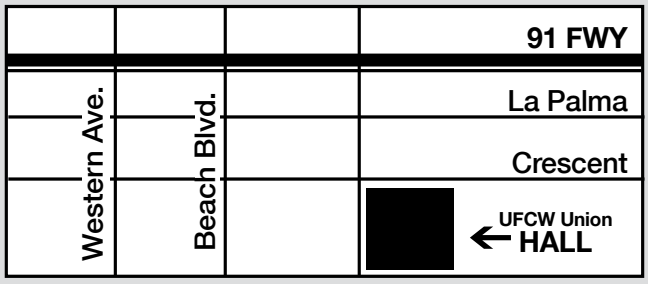

continued

the aggressive sounds. When you consider he went all the way through *Rubber Soul*. Incredible. Emerick took over for *Revolver*."

Bosworth stresses the one thing both engineers Smith and Emerick had in common regarding their vocal department duties. "Abbey Road had a unique wind screener pop filter closer to the mike being the plosives where certain sounds would become very powerful and actually collapse the microphone capsule. You could get the vocalist closer to the microphone and a 'more in your face sound.' They came up with a metal windscreen that had two different screens and two different meshes on them and different physical angles where the one metal mesh was rounded and one was flat.

"The pattern of the mesh," he describes, "were diagonal to each other. Bolted tight on to the microphone made with custom metal for Abbey Road. People started noticing quickly that moisture would get on the microphone capsule and you'd have to replace the capsule. Any pop filer changes anything to a certain extent. Unlike screen pop filters made out of foam these were made out of metal and certainly not dampening high end. Those are unique.

"One of the other reasons the Beatles' recordings sound so good still to this day," Bosworth pontificates, "is that the tape machine format was one inch four track. A much wider tape width per track than other analog tape format that has ever been conceived. The equivalent of 24 track would require that the tape format be six inches wide to get the same fidelity that the one inch four track provided.

"The Beatles started with four tracks, moved to once inch 8 right track machine half way during the *White* album and then *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road* were all recorded in one inch 8 track format. *Abbey Road* was done on a transistor recording desk.

"With the original release of The Beatles' *Red* and *Blue* vinyl sets my first reaction at the time had to do with the album covers," remembers poet and KCPR-DJ James Cushing. "Since it was the cover of the abandoned *Get Back* LP backed with the original cover of 'Please Please Me.' This was the first time as Americans we got to see that pairing of the early days and the later days on the cover of an album. The early versus the late was kind of the Capitol Records way that yes the dream was really over. And this is what the dreamers really looked liked when they first fell asleep and this is what the dreamers looked like when they woke up.

"In addition, the sense was that there was another way to order the songs suggested that there was another way that the past could be understood. Hearing these *Red* and *Blue* albums in the very early '90s with my daughter Iris helped me get over my emotional aversion to hearing The Beatles' music after (John) Lennon's murder."

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"Don't forget," DJ and author, Roger Steffens relates, "hearing the *Red* and *Blue* Beatles' albums it detached them from their original context to an American audience. We absorbed the Beatles' catalogue in a very different way from the British. We have to talk in geographic terms when we are trying to make some sense of this stuff. So these albums are detached and thrown together in a way that was different from the way an album was tracked. With great taste, and a sense of build, action and momentum.

"The magic of the Beatles," contends Steffens, "was that everything sounded different from what came before. And that was a conscious choice on their part. (Sir) George Martin mentioned as the fifth Beatles doesn't begin to cover it," he concludes.

"George Martin was the catalyst for the embryonic dreams of Lennon, McCartney, Starkey and Harrison," reinforces songwriter and record producer Kim Fowley. "Martin was able to consolidate and expand their anticipation. He was a great editor."

Earlier this decade inside the legendary Capitol Studios Studio B in Hollywood, California, I had a memorable conversation one afternoon with Sir George Martin.

I had met all four of his lads as a reporter and author over the years. Martin didn't entirely discuss the Beatles that day inside the Capitol premises. We actually chatted about a Frank Sinatra recording session he had attended in the very same room on his first visit to Hollywood in 1958. The EMI label sent him over the pond after Martin was invited by Capitol executive Voyle Gilmore to visit the facility.

Martin recalled that date when Sinatra was backed by the Billy May's orchestra while actress Lauren Bacall was in attendance. The songs cut were eventually placed on Sinatra's *Come Fly With Me* L.P.

I made it a point to thank George Martin for discovering and signing the Beatles to their British record label deal in addition to his persistent efforts encouraging Capitol Records in the U.S. to issue his produced recordings on the band starting in 1963 and continuing into '64.

It was at that Martin encounter, where one of his Beatles' productions started playing in studio B. George was autographing a solo album, put his arm around me and enthused, "Pretty good stuff. Don't you think?" RCN

Harvey Kubernik is the author of several books and has published hundreds of music articles over the last four decades.

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NEW 2010 RELEASES:

THE BOOTLEG SERIES VOLUME 9: THE WITMARK DEMOS & BOB DYLAN-THE ORIGINAL MONO RECORDINGS

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK

Columbia Records released Bob Dylan's *The Bootleg Series Volume 9 The Witmark Demos* in October in conjunction with Columbia/Legacy's release of Dylan's first eight long-playing albums in a box set titled *Bob Dylan-The Original Mono Recordings*. *The Witmark Demos* saw their first commercial release nearly five decades after they were first recorded, and *Bob Dylan-The Original Mono Recordings* returning to the marketplace for the first time ever on Compact Disc, as well as on fully analogue 180-gram vinyl. Both are available online from SonyMusicDigital.com/bobdylan and Amazon.com.

The Witmark Demos features 47 Bob Dylan songs recorded by the artist – accompanied only by his acoustic guitar, harmonica and occasionally piano – for his first music publisher, Leeds Music, in January 1962, and for his second publisher, M. Witmark & Sons, between 1962 and 1964.

Only three of the Witmark and Leeds initiated recordings have ever been officially released. Dylan's creative team of Jeff Rosen and Steve Berkowitz for this Bootleg Series Volume 9 have collected 39 tracks of the Witmark songwriting demos, coupled with another 8 tracks from the session with Leeds. The deluxe edition has a booklet of session photos and extensive liner notes by Colin Escott.

All of these songs on *The Witmark Demos* were written – and their subsequent demos recorded – before Bob Dylan turned 24 years old.

Listening to these recordings, one can trace Dylan's profound development as a songwriter from "Man On The Street" and "Ramblin' Gamblin' Willie" through "Blowin' In The Wind," "The Times They Are A Changin'," "Masters Of War," and "Mr. Tambourine Man."

Among the many tunes found on *The Witmark Demos* are 15 Bob Dylan tunes that were recorded by the artist only for these sessions, and which have never been sanctioned to consumers until now. These include "Ballad For A Friend," "Long Ago, Far Away," "The Death Of Emmett Till," and "Guess I'm Doing Fine."

While many of these early Dylan compositions on *The Witmark Demos* found their way onto Bob Dylan's own albums, much of the world's first exposure to them was through their recordings by others, including Peter, Paul and Mary and Stevie Wonder ("Blowin' In The Wind"), Judy Collins and Rod Stewart ("Tomorrow Is A Long Time") and The Byrds and William Shatner, "Mr Tambourine Man.").

It's a testament to the lasting cultural impact of these songs that they have been covered by more than a thousand artists in the nearly fifty years since these demos were created.

A little known fact about "Blowin' In The Wind" and its arrival to the airwaves and the hit singles chart courtesy of Peter, Paul & Mary, was provided to me in 2007 by record producer and former Atlantic Records partner, Jerry Wexler. He mentioned in his last interview over the telephone that while at Atlantic, he made a serious effort to ink Peter, Paul

continued

JAN PERSSON/GETTY IMAGES

Bob Dylan

SONY/SANDY SPEISER

"The Dylan Witmark demos will be revealing in the way Van Gogh's sketchbooks are revealing, and the rate of this young man's productivity was another amazing element of his early success," marvels poet Dr. James Cushing.

continued

& Mary to the label and really wanted to produce the trio cutting "Blowin' In The Wind." Wexler even booked a session that was then immediately cancelled when he learned that Albert Grossman had just pacted his management trio clients with their Dylan song to the Warner Bros. Reprise label. In a year it would be a million-seller for Peter, Paul & Mary, and Bob Dylan would come to be regarded as the biggest folk singer in the world.

The most telling impact of Dylan's Witmark world before we heard them in 2010 is found and acknowledged in 2004 during Dylan's *Chronicles Volume One* autobiography.

The book opens with the name Lou Levy, who oversaw the Leeds Music Publishing Company that was affiliated with ASCAP and Levy's Duchess Music, aligned with BMI. Dylan reflects in his autobiography, *Chronicles Volume One,* where music publisher Levy schlepped him to Jack Dempsey's restaurant after a meeting.

It was John Hammond the Columbia Records A&R man and producer who signed Dylan to the label and then steered Dylan to Levy and Leeds for song registration and to eventually expose his material. Hammond has mentioned Dylan was paid an advance of five hundred dollars by Levy to join his firm. Dylan himself has written that the music publishing chief then signed and advanced him a hundred dollars against future royalties. An engineer ran a tape machine documenting many of these selections now made available for the first time on *The Witmark Demos*.

Dylan's *Chronicles Volume One* also ends with a chapter and another reference to Levy.

Dylan was able to politely split from his agreement with Leeds-Duchess after Albert Grossman or Artie Mogull, his publishing partner, eagerly gave Dylan one thousand dollars to personally buy their way out his Leeds contract without any repercussions.

In 1962, Dylan's debut album had sold around 3,000 copies at this time. Lou Levy, a product of the big band era, hadn't recouped his investment yet, nor had seen Dylan's future impact like Hammond did, and didn't seem miffed at all letting Dylan and his repertoire relocate to a Grossman and Mogull controlled-publishing house. Try doing the math on this trip over the last 49 years.

The background stories of this Dylan departure from Levy and Co. to the newer Grossman and Mogull team vary. From a guy at Leeds making the decision to allow Dylan to be a free agent to Dylan then armed with a grand in his hand going up to their office during lunch and having a secretary handle the action for his quick release out of the Leeds' paperwork.

Still, I can't help thinking behind this new *Witmark* retail item there are some "guilt germs," a Frank Sinatra term. Or, at the very least on Dylan's part this century, some small but deep-seated karmic-inspired motivation, let alone payback, Dylan had for Levy and the initial validation and paperwork (and first song writing-earned check) he handed him

nearly 50 years ago.

Poet Dr. James Cushing teaches literature and creative writing in the English Dept. at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo since 1989. Dylan has appeared on his syllabus with the "Bringing It All" album appeared on a Great Books III course he taught with Steven Marx one quarter.

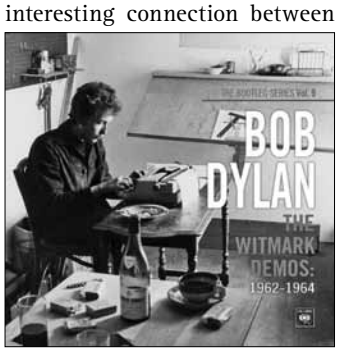
Cushing currently hosts a long running weekly radio program, "Bob Dylan's Lunch," that airs Mondays 1-2 PM on KCPR-FM.

"The Dylan Witmark demos will be revealing in the way Van Gogh's sketchbooks are revealing, and the rate of this young man's productivity was another amazing element of his early success," marvels Cushing.

"They are a preview and also the recordings were also done not really to function as recordings but to function as demonstrations or as examples of how the song could sound. Which is to say that the kind of self-consciousness that can come into a recording situation in a studio with an engineer is probably not going on here. Given that it's just one guy and a reel-to-reel tape recorder in some six-by-eight foot office studio on Madison Ave.

"These early Witmark demos also demonstrate that Dylan learned and absorbed much in Hibbing, Minnesota, before he relocated and re-invented himself in New York," reflects Cushing. "The thing is, that he needed to do was individuate himself and separate himself from his background before he could appreciate his background.

"The release of *Volume 9* of his Bootleg series opens up an interesting connection between



"It was the unnerving quality of his initial albums on Columbia Records that helped make emergent twenty-somethings aware that you could go... into a totally different iteration of popular music."

Dylan and Frank Zappa," adds Cushing. "In the sense that Zappa wanted to do 'Beat The Boots' by essentially, doing his own bootleg series.

"I think that Dylan and Zappa, both produced by Tom Wilson, both lived in L.A. and both members of a mutual admiration society. Because Zappa name checks Dylan on the inside of the *Freak Out!* album. There was also talk of Zappa producing Dylan."

Roger Steffens, music scholar, Reggae music expert, and a renegade radio DJ since 1961, first heard on WVOX, in Westchester, New York, has a 50-year overview of Bob Dylan that is quite unique from the DJs, mass media and Dylan fans who followed his initial debut Dylan album spins over the airwaves.

"It was the unnerving quality of his initial albums on Columbia Records that helped make emergent twenty-somethings aware that you could go beyond pure vocal harmonies and love sick teenage messages into a totally different iteration of popular music. It was other college kids that turned me onto him, and at first I didn't get him. I was an Alan Freed doo–wop rock 'n' roller all the way through. And the only other vocalists I listened too were Nina Simone and Harry Belafonte.

continued

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"It's fascinating watching Dylan bring his unreleased music and catalog forward, because Dylan is more than an advanced amateur historian. Dylan is a folklorist of the first water. Dylan in mono, like anyone else documented in the mono setting, has to have their sound all properly balanced at the same time. This situation helped create immortal masterpieces of one take art, like Jackie Wilson's 'Lonely Teardrops' – one take, live, in a big empty theater, with everyone fully engaged."

The Original Mono Recordings is comprised of Bob Dylan's first eight long-playing albums, painstakingly reproduced from their first generation monaural mixes as the artist intended them to be heard: One channel of powerful sound, both direct and immediate. While stereo recordings had been available as early as the mid-1950s, mono was still the predominant – and often preferred – mode of recording and mixing by the top artists of the 1960s. As a result, artists like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan devoted their attention to the mono mixes, leaving the stereo mixing process to studio engineers.

These eight albums – spanning the artist's self-titled debut in March 1962, through John Wesley Harding released on December 27, 1967 – are universally hailed as some of the most groundbreaking works in the history of recorded music.

Together with *The Witmark Demos*, they provide the public with a wide-ranging view of Bob Dylan's stirring work during the 1960s, and chronicle his evolution from fledgling songwriter to one of the world's most inventive and singular recording artists.

SONY/DAN HUNTSTEIN

***The Original Mono Recordings* is comprised of Bob Dylan's first eight long-playing albums, painstakingly reproduced from their first generation monaural mixes.**

The Original Mono Recordings are accompanied by a deluxe booklet, featuring vintage photographs of Bob Dylan and an expansive essay from renowned author and cultural critic – and longtime Dylan aficionado – Greil Marcus. Each disc in the set is placed in its own individual jacket which faithfully replicates the original album artwork, complete with labels and stickers that were found on the original 1960s releases.

The set is available as a deluxe box and on 180-gram vinyl. The package has a booklet of vintage photographs and an essay by Bill Flanagan.

Bob Johnston is the record producer whose studio credits list Johnny Cash's *Folsom Prison* and *San Quentin* live LPs, the first classic album of Leonard Cohen, and culture-altering long players for Bob Dylan: *Highway 61 Revisited, Blonde On Blonde, John Wesley Harding, Nashville Skyline, Self Portrait* and *New Morning*.

Over 40 years later, Johnston, now based in Hawaii, recalled in a 2007 interview I earlier published with him elaborated on his landmark production endeavors and audio collaboration with Bob Dylan that he mixed in both mono and stereo album formats.

While working for Columbia Records in New York, Bob Johnston was initially introduced to Dylan in 1965 when he started producing *Highway 61 Revisited*.

"I was standing by the sound board and I said to Dylan 'Listen man, you ought to come to Nashville sometime. I got a fix up down there with no clocks and the musicians are fuckin' great.'

"So I finished *Highway 61*. Then, Dylan called me about six months later and he said, "Man, I got a bunch of songs.

What do you think about going to Nashville?' 'That's what I was talkin' about!' In 1966 we went in for *Blonde On Blonde*."

In 1967 Johnston teamed up again with Dylan for the epochal album *John Wesley Harding*.

"I would place glass around Dylan for recording," Johnston recollects. "He had a different vocal sound. I didn't make his different vocal sound. He always had different sounds on. I never wanted to be (Phil) Spector. And while the rest of the world was doing an album as big as *Blonde On Blonde*, which everybody was, the more musicians they could get the better it was, we went in with four people. In the middle of a psychedelic world!

"I'll tell you something else I did with Dylan, and recording Dylan and Johnny Cash," he exclaims. "Everybody else (at the time) was using one microphone. Which means you have to sacrifice something. If you're gonna have a band you can't have the band playin' full tilt, if you've got him in the middle because and can't understand everything with different people in there raising the guitar up, raise the drum up, and do shit like that. And what I always did was that I had three microphones because he was always jerking his head around, and I put the microphone on the left, center and right and it didn't matter where in the fuckin' room he went. And then I'd mix and start on the left and go all the way over on the right.

"I'd usually have the piano on the outside left, without any echo. And then I'd put the echo on the right side. And then I'd have one of the guitars on the right and put the echo on the left. And then I'd match it all alone and brought up everything even, so they could fight it out. And then that's the way the band was. They didn't have to raise this and lower this, and 15 people sitting around doin' all that shit. The band was there and he was full tilt. Then you could go any place in the room and understand him. And I never heard another word from him about anything

"It's fascinating watching Dylan bring his unreleased music and catalog forward, because Dylan is more than an advanced amateur historian. Dylan is a folklorist of the first water."

"What I did was put a bunch of microphones all over the room and up on the ceiling. I would use all those echo when everything got through and I could do that as much as I wanted. I wanted it to sound better than anything else sounded ever, and I wanted it to be where everybody could hear it," chortles Johnston. "And I don't know what Dylan would have been if he stayed in New York with those people, and been mixed like that. And I know he would have never done that shit like he did in Nashville.

"I always had four or eight speakers all over the room and I had 'em going. The louder I played it the better it sounded to me. This is the way I really did it. As a songwriter, I wrote songs, too. Dylan changed the world. Every song he did I loved. I was a Dylan freak and I knew he was changing the world. I knew he was changing the society as we knew it," Johnston reiterates.

"On its own terms," DJ Cushing presents, "the mono Dylan bestows a single-sound-source structure on the music that fits the three 'rock' albums very well.

"The reason the monos are

continued on page 28

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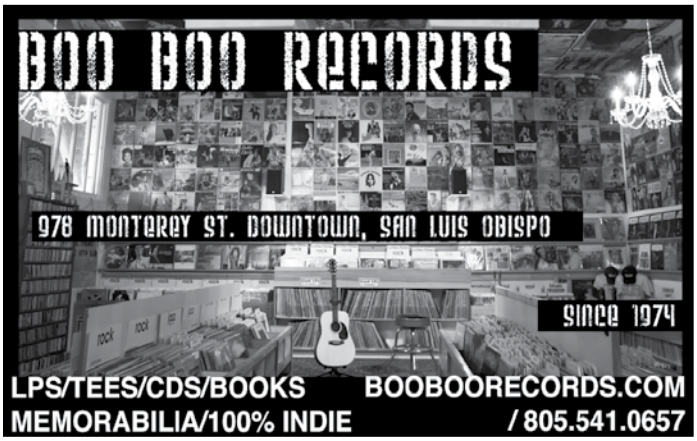

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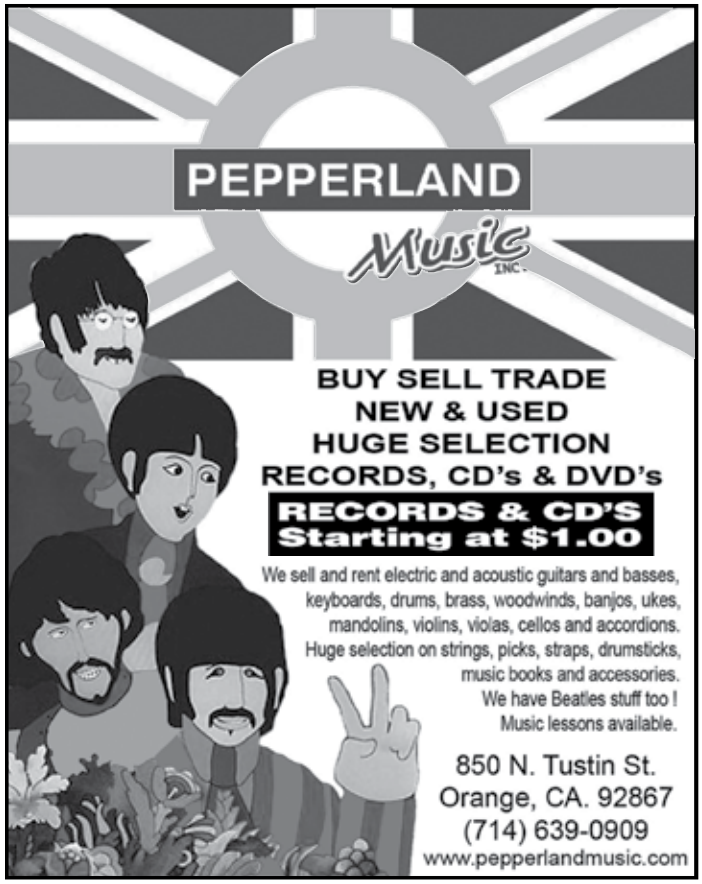
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continued from page 23

preferable to the early stereo LPs is that with solo acoustic Dylan there is one single sound source. Instead of two sound sources. You get much more of a natural sound with the thing blended as it is right now.

"The first few acoustic albums ought to sound as good on the CDs as they do right now," he continues. "It's the three rock albums, *Bringing It All Back Home, Highway 61* and *Blonde On Blonde* that really make the big difference. Also, I bought the original LPs in mono in 1965-66. So I first fell in love with those records in mono.

"The mono does give that single sound source and that evenly blended sound that adds to the mysterious of it. Whereas the stereo mix somewhat separates the instruments and add an additional clarity. Which is not always exactly what you want. I think some of the early Beatles' records are terrible in stereo and much better in mono.

"The stereo mixes, when I first heard them, added separation—definition to the instruments, so that I heard the two guitars and the upright bass in 'Desolation Row' clearly — but is clarity the most valued goal with music that creates/inhabits a surrealist dreamscape? Also, other minor details are different, such as 'It Takes A Lot to Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry' being 40 seconds shorter in mono, or the lead guitar on 'Visions of Johanna' coming in at different places," reminds Cushing

"Armed with the knowledge that the mono mix took up most of the studio time, both in the case of Dylan, The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, given that, I think that the mono need to be taken seriously in the spontaneous sense and the need to be thought of as an alternative sound experience.

"Having these albums in a box does give them the kind of privileged status that they have always already had in the listeners' mind.

"Having these albums in a box does give them the kind of privileged status that they have always already had in the listeners' mind."

"Dylan is a genius and we are fortunate to be able to share the same time and space with him. Geniuses do that. Geniuses continue to grow and develop. Geniuses have different periods in their art. Geniuses continue to have work that resonates with people. And Bob Dylan is the one genius to have come out of American rock music. And there are no others, except possibly for Jimi Hendrix. But he died too young for us to really tell."

"I always liked the beat of Dylan's music, starting with *Blonde On Blonde*," confides poet/actor, Harry E. Northup. "And the way Dylan looked to me. He was as beautiful as Elizabeth Taylor. Dylan is such a lyric master. I think he's the spokesman of the generation. His words are incredible. I think that's the way his mind works. Poetry is basically one man talking to one man. That's what poetry is. He speaks to all of us.

"I love the brooding quality of Dylan, too. Just the way he changes. I saw him at Carnegie Hall in New York and he hit hard. I was in the fourth row and I thought he was talking directly to me. Then, I saw him later in Arizona during his 'Jesus Trip.' People walked out and he said, 'If you walk out you're not gonna get the message.'

"I like him in all the different ways he goes. God bless him. What a great artist." RCN

Harvey Kubernik is the author of "Canyon of Dreams: The Magic and the Music of Laurel Canyon."

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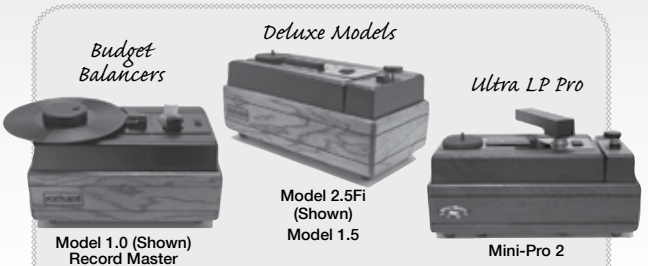

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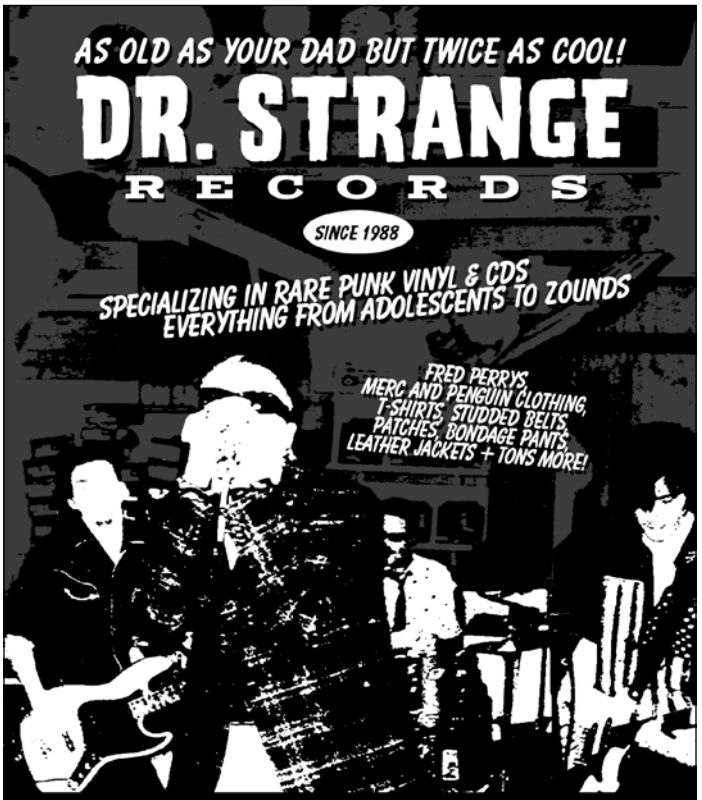

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America's CHEESIEST CHART TOPPERS *(Part 2)*

BY MICHAEL SIGMAN

Igor Stravinsky may have been right when he said, "Music is the best way to digest time." But I'm sure the great Russian composer would have agreed that some music – particularly pop hits whose predictable melodies and insipid lyrics have a way of permanently implanting themselves in our minds – inspire nothing so much as a desire for regurgitation.

In Part One, we revisited such recorded catastrophes as Bobby Goldsboro's "Honey," Morris Albert's "Feelings" and Charlene's "I've Never Been to Me."

Strong candidates for Part 2 included such stomach-churning charttoppers

1. Paul Anka with Odia Coates
You're Having My Baby (#1, 1974 - 3 weeks)

The former teen star, absent from the charts for 15 years, made a dramatic comeback with this cringeworthy male chauvinist opus – later voted the "Worst Song of All Time" in a CNN poll. And this was no fluke: in a nod to Stravinsky's description of music as digestion, it was Anka who wrote – in the totemic "My Way" – "Yes, there were times I'm sure you knew/When I bit off more than I could chew/But through it all when there was doubt/I ate it up and spit it out."

2. Ohio Express
Yummy Yummy Yummy – Ohio Express #4, 1968

Bubblegum songs were not meant to be swallowed, never mind digested. But this cut is unlistenable not because it's a bubblegum song, but because it's a bad bubblegum song. As opposed to, say, this.

3. Mary MacGregor
Torn Between Two Lovers (#1, 1976 - 2 weeks)

This begins badly – "There are times when a woman has to say what's on her mind/Even though she knows how much it's gonna hurt" – and goes downhill from there. Writer Peter Yarrow said the novel Dr. Zhivago inspired his lyric. Mercifully, Pasternak didn't live to hear it

4. Billy Joel
We Didn't Start The Fire (#7, 1989)

A list does not a lyric make, unless you're Cole Porter.

5. America
A Horse With No Name (#1, 1972 – 3 weeks)

This nonsensical Neil Young sound-alike replaced the master's "Heart Of Gold" atop the charts in 1972. Note the clever deployment of the oft-neglected noun "things" in the unforgettable line, "There were plants and birds and rocks and things." Not to mention that most alliterative of phrases, "The heat was hot."

6. Jennifer Lopez
Jenny From The Block (#3, 2002)

"Don't be fooled by the rocks that I got/I'm still, I'm still Jenny from the block/Used to have a little, now I have a lot..." So humble, so down to earth.

as Barry Manilow's "I Write the Songs" (no, you don't, not even this one, which was penned by Beach Boy Bruce Johnston), Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman" (no, you're not) and Starship's "We Built This City on Rock and Roll" (no, you most definitely did not).

A carton of Maalox later, I submit the following list for induction into the Worst Hits Hall of Fame:

Of course, musical taste is subjective. Stravinsky himself endured concertgoers' catcalls and rioting at the 1913 premier of his masterwork "The Rite Of Spring." So if you are among the millions who loved these records, may the force — or is it farce? — be with you. RCN

Follow Michael Sigman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/majorsongs and read his other articles on *Huffington Post* (com).

7. Celine Dion with Peabo Bryson
Beauty And The Beast (#9, 1991)

Some film titles simply don't cry out for theme songs with lyrics. Paul Simon scored; no pun intended, with "Mrs. Robinson," not The Graduate. And how nauseating might a love song called Titanic have turned out?

8. Mouth and MacNeal

How Do You Do (#8, 1972)

This travesty inspired my Record World Magazine colleague Gregg Geller to bust his review copy into little pieces — after he'd listened and picked it to become a smash hit.

9. David Geddes
Run Joey Run (#4, 1975)

Terry Jacks
Seasons In The Sun (#1, 1974 — 3 weeks)

Bo Donaldson & the Heywoods
Billy, Don't Be A Hero (#1, 1974)

Kenny Rogers
Coward Of The County (#3, 1979)

I like a good story song as much as the next guy — David

10. Les Crane
Desiderata (#8, 1971)

Bad beat
Couldn't dance to it.

Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust" and

Eminem's "Stan" can't be beat. But the genre can also bring out the worst in pop hits. These sides are mega-melodramatic tales, full of crummy sound and provoking listener fury, signifying nothing.

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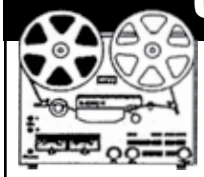

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Here comes the fuzz

BY ROBBY RUSSELL AND BRENT MARLEY

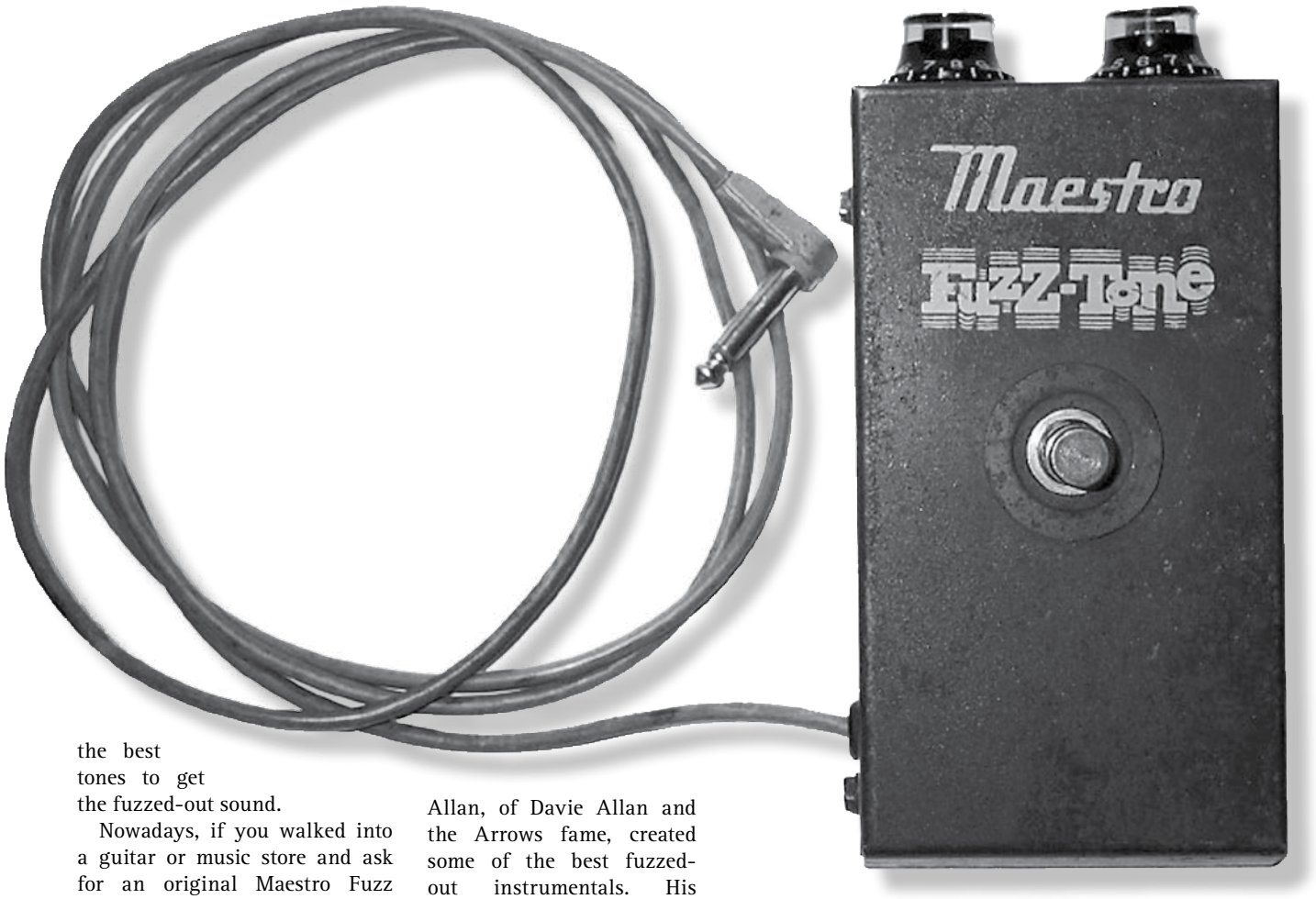
Recently, while doing Internet research for Garage-Mania – the online radio show I host with my sidekick – Nurse Cheril, I stumbled upon a fascinating article about Fuzz. The piece, by Brent Marley, published in his online magazine, Psych Trail Mix, seemed worth sharing. Below is a reprint of the story – with some added insights and a list of my favorite fuzz songs.

FUZZ ... When most people hear that word, they think of a few different things: the fuzz that comes off an old sweater, the fuzz on peaches or perhaps, the old slang used to alert others that the authorities are closing in while they're smoking a joint the size of Texas. ("Here comes the fuzz, Man!") However, to fans of psych/garage rock music, the first thing that pops into our brains is the squelching, mind-tingling, abrasive, brain-massaging FUZZED-OUT guitar sounds with which so many records – particularly those from the '60s – were heavily laden.

Let's take a look at the history of fuzz: where it originated, how it's mutated and at some of my favorite fuzz classics.

In the early days, fairly primitive, animalistic methods were employed by musicians to obtain a different, rougher, distorted sound for their guitars. Amplifiers usually took the brunt of the punishment when these methods were applied. Assaulted amplifiers, whether they'd been slashed with a knife or jammed with a screwdriver, provided the first glimpse of what would later be considered "fuzz," or distorted guitar sounds. There's been some speculation about who originated the vicious assaults on guitar amps. I would guess that Link Wray was probably one of the people to do this with his raunchy instrumentals from the '50s on such as the classic "Rumble" and, ironically enough, "Switchblade." However, amplifiers were saved from further beatings when fuzz, as we would come to know it, was first created commercially by Gibson in the form of the Maestro Fuzz Tone – first heard on the 1965 Rolling Stones song "Satisfaction." Many '60s groups including the amazing psych/garage band The Seeds adopted the Maestro.

Fuzz can sound like a buzz saw or, on faster numbers, almost like a quick sort of fart! However, instead of methane gas exiting an anus created by digested Brussels sprouts, the sound is created by the circuitry inside the fuzz box that boosts and distorts the input signal to provide that rough, raunchy fuzz tone. The distortion and fuzz tones that I am speaking of are the really rough fuzzed-out-kind that just sneer and give attitude when they comes out of the speakers. You could say that the '80s metal bands used distortion, but it was a more produced-sounding, polished distortion (I won't even call it fuzz). It was nothing like the nastiness of real fuzz that bands like the Seeds, Music Machine, The Del-Vetts, The Shadows of Knight, Moving Sidewalks, The Swamp Rats and countless others had back in the '60s. As far as fuzz boxes go, the ones from the '60s offered



the best tones to get the fuzzed-out sound.

Nowadays, if you walked into a guitar or music store and ask for an original Maestro Fuzz Tone or a Mosrite Fuzzrite pedal, they'd probably look at you with a puzzled expression and think to themselves, "Why the hell does he want that?" I think fuzz must be an acquired taste. To the uninitiated, it probably sounds annoying, irritating and nagging. However, to those who are hip to fuzzed-out ear candy, our tympanic membranes embrace the fuzzy nastiness with open ears and allow it to massage our brains and erase whatever bullshit from our memories we were unwillingly exposed to at an earlier point in the day. You could say I'm a bit hung up on fuzz tones, but I'm telling you, they are therapeutic!

Davie Allan was one musician who was so masterful at the art of raunchy in-your-face fuzz that he was penned "King of Fuzz." Allan, of Davie Allan and the Arrows fame, created some of the best fuzzed-out instrumentals. His fuzz-ugliness is featured in several biker movies from the '60s, including the 1966 classic, Wild Angels. If you haven't seen this film, please do yourself a favor and go see it – actually, you should buy it!

You've probably heard Allan's "Blues Theme" off the first *Nuggets Compilation Box Set*. There is a lot more where that came from! Allan has crafted countless, incredibly abrasive, raunchy, full-of-attitude fuzz-laden instrumentals. The best of his '60s output is probably the album *Cycle-Delic Sounds*. A more comprehensive collection of his work can be purchased from Sundazed Records – it's a two-disc set entitled *Devil's Rumble*.

TOP 10 FUZZED-OUT SONGS

There are tons of heavy, fuzz-laden songs out there, but the following tunes – in no particular order – are the Robby Russell and Brent Marley top ten picks. The majority of these songs are from the '60s, but you'll find the occasional oddball that rightfully deserves a spot on our list.

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What else can I say about this? The acid punk madness from the spaceman himself will have your synapses firing full throttle on this one! It's an all-out assault of the senses. Fully equipped with all the fuzz you could ever want, not to mention just wonderfully fucked-

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up alien space mumblings. Not only is there plenty of flattened wah-pedal fuzz insanity in here, but Helios barrages you with several different guitar tones as well. It's fun to blast in the car with all the windows down and see what reactions you get, too! Available on *Lactating Purple*.

MUSIC MACHINE: EAGLE NEVER HUNTS THE FLY

From the opening notes of this song, you know it's going to be a nasty fuzz monster. As mentioned before, The Music Machine created their own fuzz pedal to provide a tone completely unique for the Music Machine to utilize to the max – as they do in this song. It starts with Sean Bonniwell explaining to us why the eagle never hunts the fly. In between those verses we get hit with heavy blasts of '60s fuzz courtesy of that homemade fuzz box! The song eventually moves into a freak-out instrumental interlude and an insane wail from Bonniwell. Available on Beyond the Garage.

THE CAVEMEN: IT'S TRASH

The title of this song says it all: it's a very trashy-sounding fuzzer. From the opening echoed wailing that declares, "It's trash," followed by a very trebly, nasty-sounding fuzzed-out chord, that is left to resonate before the next fuzz assault comes at you, this song is everything the title advertises. Not only is the fuzz extra-primitive, trashy and nasty, but the vocals are quite extreme and tortured. This is one of those rare gems of the '60s. The only other song I've heard from them is "Mustang Sally."

THE DEL-VETTS: LAST TIME AROUND

The year 1966 gave us this absolute psych/punk classic. The first note starts off the snarling fuzz. For some reason, when I listen to this, I think of a clock and the hands of it going in crazy directions. Don't ask me why – I guess it's something the fuzz is doing to my brain that paints the image. Absolute classic here – you can hear it on the first *Nuggets* Box Set.

DAVIE ALLAN & THE ARROWS: CYCLE-DELIC

How could you have a top-10 fuzz songs list and not include this monster from the "King of Fuzz" himself, Davie Allan. As Allan once mentioned, this song definitely sounds the way a motorcycle would if it were a musical instrument. Laden with enough fuzz and wah to rip your head completely off your torso, this song stands alone as one of the absolute greatest fuzz classics of our time. Available on *Devils Rumble* and on *Cycle-Delic Sounds Of...* which includes the best songs of Davie Allan's '60s output.

RON WRAY LIGHT SHOW: SPEED

This is a great song just overflowing with fuzz. It's a basic sort of song with the same few words repeated over and over again: "speed, speed baby." But the fuzz that follows is just so insanely fuzzy! I wonder what fuzz pedal this guy is using. It sounds like he

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maniacally slashed his amplifiers and then also played through some fuzz boxes on top of it! You can find this Fuzz Monster on the *30 Seconds Before The Calico Wall* CD.

SHADOWS OF KNIGHT: TAURUS

Named after my zodiac sign! This is an all-out instrumental that will get you grooving to some tasty fuzz goodness. It's got to be one of the greatest fuzz instrumentals out there! Not only is this fuzz-filled but it contains some amazing bouts of controlled feedback as well.

THE SPIDERS: DON'T BLOW YOUR MIND

This was Alice Cooper's band before he made it big. With cool lyrics and a great groove to the song, this is up there with the best. The fuzz hits like a hammer in and out, blasting your head with teasing little doses of fuzz. "Take what you can find, but don't blow your mind." Check it out on *Back from the Grave Vol. 4*

THE STEREO SHOESTRINGS: ON THE ROAD SOUTH

This is one of the absolute best. The Stereo Shoestrings take on the Pretty Things classic "Defecting Grey," although this version they've titled "On The Road South." Loaded with enough fuzz and wah to tear your head off, this is a fuzzer that goes along at breakneck speed; very punk and very psych. The band was from Corpus Christi, Texas, and you can hear it on the CD *The Best of Pebbles Vol.3*

ELECTRIC PRUNES: I HAD TOO MUCH TOO DREAM (LAST NIGHT)

From its magnificent, oscillating intro to its final crashing, shuttering fade, this song is a vivid celebration of the exciting changes pop music was undergoing in 1966–67. The startling effects including fuzz, its overwhelming vibrato guitar and booming production herald the seemingly endless possibilities of new psychedelic era. The band was formed in Los Angeles in 1965, and this song made it to number 11 in November 1966. RCN

If you love the '60s and '70s garage and psych rock we play on Garage-Mania Invasion Radio, you will enjoy Brent Marley's Psych Trail Mix. It is one of the best online rock magazines I have ever seen. You can view the original article in issue # 4. www.helioschrome.com/psychtrailmix.html

Garage-Mania Invasion Radio with Robby Russell and Nurse Cheril is aired live every Saturday from 1 to 3 p.m. Pacific time on wpmd.org, Cerritos College in Southern California. The show is also aired on the Centanni Broadcast Network on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. Pacific and at various times on the weekends. We will send free copies of the show to all readers of Record Collector News. Just e-mail us from my website www.robbyrusssellshow.com where you also hear past shows on demand.

More Fuzz masterpieces:

"Blue Shoes"—The News
"Evil Hoodoo"—The Seeds
"Psychotic Reaction"—Count Five
"Mind Transferal"—Davie Allan and the Arrows
"Last Day on Earth"—Velvet Haze
"Searching"—Omens
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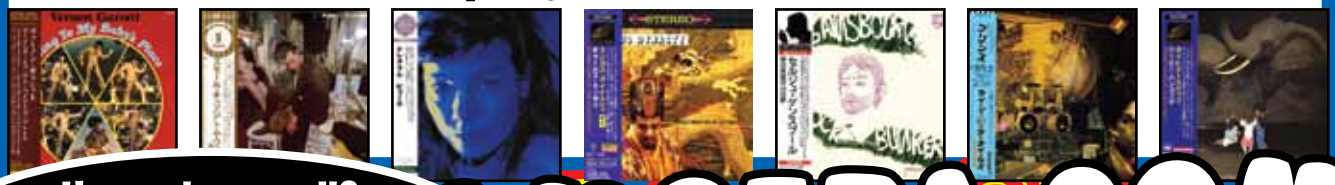

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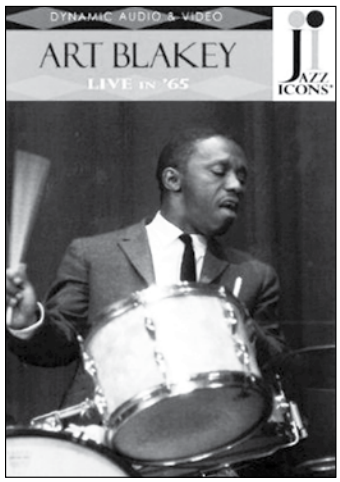
BEBOP & BEYOND

Art Blakey: Mentor

BY ARMAND LEWIS



The idea of mentors goes back to Greek mythology. The word itself comes from the name of a character in Homer's "Odyssey" and has since become synonymous with those who provide advice, counseling and support to newcomers and apprentices in occupational settings.

Jazz has a rich history of mentoring – notably King Oliver's mentoring of a young Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker's mentoring of a teenaged Miles Davis. Davis himself subsequently mentored a number of jazz greats – from John Coltrane to Wallace Roney. But nobody in music has mentored more major figures than drummer Art Blakey.

Originally a pianist, the Pittsburgh native taught himself to play drums and by his early twenties was drumming in pianist Mary Lou Williams' trio. He then toured with Fletcher Henderson and most importantly, the Billy Eckstine Band, where he would meet other like-minded musicians who would soon create be-bop and modern jazz.

In the late 1940s, Blakey would start his own band. The "Seventeen Messengers" was a rehearsal band, but by the early 1950s, Blakey and his then-partner Horace Silver would reduce the group to a quintet – the immortal "Jazz Messengers".

The list of jazz great who got their start with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers is truly astonishing. The group gave first opportunities to everyone from Clifford Brown, Lou Donaldson and Hank Mobley forward to Cedar Walton, Freddie Hubbard, Gary Bartz, and in the 1980s youngsters such as Wynton Marsalis and his brother Branford.

Many of the Messengers' various incarnations and offshoot groups would be extensively recorded, though some would not. One such short-lived Blakey group has come to light in a European TV broadcast now available to American viewers some 45 years after it was first broadcast.

Art Blakey – Live in '65 (Jazz Icons/Naxos) documents a rather unusual Blakey line-up featuring former Messengers heavyweight Freddie Hubbard on trumpet along with the European based saxophonist Nathan Davis, avant-garde pianist Jaki Byard and Messengers stalwart, bassist Reggie Workman. Playing as the "New Jazzmen", the quintet burns through the one-hour broadcast concert.

Of the four tunes played here, two of them are Freddie Hubbard compositions and the trumpeter makes the most of it. The entire concert showcases Hubbard at his strongest – on "The Hub" and the other Hubbard composition "Crisis" as well as on the ballad standard "Blue Moon." Though saxophonist Davis lays out on

the ballad, he is also at the top of his game, and as a frontline, Davis and Hubbard practically burst into flame.

Jaki Byard is an unusual choice for piano in Blakey's group. Byard plays with all the brilliance one would expect, but his shifting modes and time signatures can be seen to momentarily throw off Blakey a bit. Not used to such free-flowing accompaniment, during at least one moment, Blakey can be seen trying to figure out where Byard is going, though the drummer adapts – as always – without missing a beat.

No Blakey performance would be complete without closing the set with his signature "New York Theme." Played at the close of every Blakey concert, this familiar piece rounds out a very unique Blakey show.

There are relatively few films of Art Blakey at work, but this video is possibly the only footage of Freddie Hubbard in his early prime. Likewise for saxophonist Nathan Davis. Luckily, French TV had the good sense to document Art Blakey's continuing jazz odyssey before he changed personnel once again, mentoring yet another generation of fine musicians. RCN

Armand Lewis buys and sells rare Jazz LPs. He can be reached at mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

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Return of The King

ELVIS PRESLEY'S GREAT COMEBACK

BY SUZANNE RUSH

By the end of the 1960s Elvis Presley was sliding into irrelevancy. Once the embodiment of rebellion, unbridled adolescent lust and rock 'n' roll's fuck-you-if-you-don't-get-it attitude, he had spent a decade diluting his image by making a string of insipid movies and lackluster records. If the Beatles, the Doors and the Summer of Love hadn't arrived in his wake to change the face of pop culture, maybe he could have retained his 1950s rock credibility without much effort. But time stands still for no man, even the King.

Gillian Gaar's *Return of the King: Elvis Presley's Great Comeback* begins in 1967, a pivotal year in Presley's life. He began it by filming Clambake, his 25th film in nine years, and one of the formulaic matinee fillers the film studios and his agent Colonel Parker insisted he make. That these movies, like *Kissin' Cousins, Harum Scarum* and *Spinout* were silly, almost indistinguishable from one another and nothing like what Presley had imagined for himself as an actor, had little bearing on the forces that pushed him to keep cranking them out.

After wrapping the film he headed to Las Vegas for a quickie marriage to his longtime consort, Priscilla, followed by a short honeymoon in Palm Springs. Within weeks he was back in Hollywood working on the ironically named, *Speedway*. That production was rapidly followed by two others — all three of which would be released with accompanying soundtracks scant on appealing songs. Presley's life may have continued on for years as a blur of bad movies followed by dull albums if fate hadn't intervened in the unlikely form of a television special.

As Garr tells it, "the special didn't begin with the thought that it would play a major role in resurrecting Elvis' career." It had its genesis in the fact that Colonel Parker couldn't secure the customary $1 million fee for the next Elvis movie, which forced him to make a deal with the NBC television network that included both a film and a TV special in order to get the money. In Parker's view, the special, announced in January of 1968, "would follow along the lines of the Elvis Christmas special he sent out to radio stations each year, featuring Elvis singing various carols interspersed with quotes that would allow the DJ to conduct an 'interview'with Presley.

"Bob Finkel, the show's executive producer, thought otherwise." The show's primary sponsor, The Singer Sewing Company also had a different concept. They wanted the special to explore "the story of Presley as the initiator of a style of music which has become an integral part of our contemporary culture." Ultimately, it was what Presley wanted, too. Goodbye Silent Night; hello black leather suit.

The NBC special, simply titled, *Elvis*, that aired in January of 1968 would mark the return of Elvis Presley and place him firmly back on rock's throne. And its success was largely the result of the creativity and grit of the show's director, Steve Binder and co-producer, Dayton Burr "Bones" Howe. The two would have to fight Parker during every step of the process to create a vital show. More importantly, they would have to enlist Presley, who was wary of performing on television. "My turf is in a recording studio, not a television stage," he told Finkel. To which Finkel replied, "Why don't you make a record and I'll put pictures to it?"

As author Gaar tells it in his exhaustive take on the ins and outs of producing the show, the song "Guitar Man" was chosen as the program's theme song. It also became the opening number; one that featured Presley singing against a scaffolding backdrop filled with Elvis cutouts — a set reminiscent of his famous *Jailhouse Rock* number.

In keeping with the idea that the program would showcase his life, several different segments were planned featuring lavish sets, dance sequences and big productions of Presley's hits. In addition to the semi-autobiographical "Guitar Man" number, the show eventually included an

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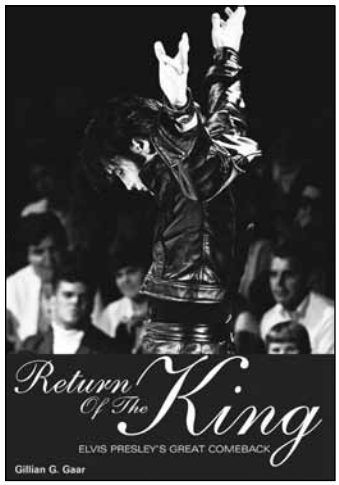
extravagant musical sequence featuring a Gospel medley. The racially-mixed Gospel sequence highlighted the element of integration present in the entire show — something unusual for the era. A segment set in a bordello featuring the song, "Let Yourself Go" — part of an envisioned "dream sequence" — was ultimately removed by the sponsors and network censors. The special ended with Presley appealing for world peace with the song "If I Can Dream."

All of these musical segments were prerecorded at Western Recorders in Hollywood, California in June of 1967 using an orchestra and backing vocalists, The Blossoms. Once the recording was finished, the rehearsals moved to the NBC soundstages in Burbank. Presley was so excited about the show that he literally moved into his dressing room because he simply didn't want to leave the studio. After the daily rehearsals, Binder recalls, "He would basically unwind from a hard day's work and spend hours in there just jamming with the guys and having fun." Watching these impromptu jams inspired Binder to create the most memorable segment of the show.

A live performance had already been planned, but now it was decided that, rather than performing a huge number, Presley should recreate the relaxed feel of his dressing room concerts. His old bandmates, including Scotty Moore and DJ Fontana were brought in for two live performances. These intimate, "unplugged" shows — shot in the round and both on the same night — with Presley dressed in black leather and surrounded by a sea of friendly, female faces, allowed the singer to reveal his humor and personality in a way that would have been impossible in a larger venue. Presley was initially nervous on stage, but quickly warmed up. By the time he had sung the first eight bars of his first hit song, "That's All Right," Bones recalls, "He knew he had 'em."



Presley may have warmed up a little bit too much. "As Steve [Binder] was preparing for the second show, [costumer] Bill Belew came running up exclaiming, 'You're never going to believe this.'" Presley had been so excited during the first performance he'd ejaculated in his leather pants. Belew, luckily, was able to clean and dry the leather in time for the second performance, which proceeded without unplanned eruptions from the star.

Return of the King, though centered on the making of Presley's life-changing NBC special, also recounts the last decade of the singer's life. From the "Memphis Sessions" that produced the hits, "Suspicious Minds" and "In the Ghetto," to his Vegas shows and exhausting late-life tours, Garr shares new anecdotes from the cast of characters that surrounded Presley during those final years.

The story inevitably follows the path of missed opportunities and the downward trajectory of Presley's life. By 1977, Presley's career was as dismal as it had been in 1967. Sadly, this time there would be no comeback. RCN

Return of the King: Elvis Presley's Great Comeback, Gilliam G. Gaar from Jawbone Press.For information go to www.jawbonepress.com

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RCN

Mighty Mini

Virtue Two.2 integrated amplifier

BY JIM KAPLAN

Seth Krinsky, at Virtue Audio, loaned me a Virtue Two.2 amplifier to try out. It sells for under $500, making it realistic for us regular folks who love listening to recorded music to own one. It can be used as an integrated amp or with a preamp. It doesn't have a phono stage, although they have models that do.

I fired up my Conrad Johnson PV2 preamp, unplugged my wonderful DynaKit Stereo 70 amp and replaced it with the Virtue Audio Two.2 and waited for the needle to drop.

I have always thought that the amp was the least important part of the line-up. Not anymore. As soon as the music started emanating from the speakers I HAD MY FACE MELTED OFF BY ROCK AND ROLL. And by that I mean that within seconds of listening to the Virtue Two.2 I was blown away by the size of the soundstage. My speakers disappeared. There was a band giving a private performance in my living room. I couldn't believe it and really wanted to test this sucker out.

I dug out the "special" listening records including Stewart Copeland's Rumble Fish sound track, Orbit by Neil Larson, produced by Bernie Grundman on Straight Ahead Records, the Analog Productions 45RPM reissue of Kenny Burrell's Midnight Blue, and lots of Beatles. There were records everywhere. My wife commented that the living room looked like a college dorm.

A couple of days later, a battery shows up in the mail and I'm supposed to plug the amp into the battery instead of the wall. So I did. And again, my face was melted away. Because there is no power cord, it's supposed relieve all that power company static and cell phone antenna noise. (More on this phenomena next issue). No harmonic distortion — or something technical sounding. I didn't really pay attention in that class. (See political endorsement on page 8). What I now heard was a really quiet background. Noise that I didn't realize was there was gone. What was left was music that I had never heard as clearly and in such detail.

Next I brought out my favorite, desert island, test record, a clean DJ promo copy of Frank Zappa's *One Size Fits All*, specifically the song "Inca Roads." (There's a lot of music going on in that song). The Virtue Two.2 coupled with the battery let me hear instrumentation that had previously escaped me during hundreds of previous, serious listening sessions.

After weeks of being immersed in the Virtue Audio Two.2, it seemed to "break in" and the sound became even smoother. It also allowed me to realize that I needed adjustments in my speaker placement. The bass is now the tightest I have ever heard it in my living room. The lows don't just boom, but they are well defined and separate. I doubt I can return the Virtue Audio Two.2 because it has brought out a new love for old records. It's as if I'm hearing them for the first time. Again.

Lordy Mama, this amp really rocks! The more I listen, the more I realize these crazy hi-fi nerds are on to something. I wonder what the Virtue Two.2 would sound like with a different preamp, like a Conrad Johnson PF9? And, an Oracle turntable... with a Grado cartridge strapped to it... Mmmmm. RCN

Check out **Virtue Audio** at Store.VirtueAudio.com and Listening.VirtueAudio.com. I've seen them demonstrating equipment at some of the LA and Orange County Audio Society's regular monthly meetings as well. www.laocas.com.

The Virtue Two.2 integrated amplifier isn't much bigger than a soda can, but still packs a lot of sound into 5"H x 2 3/4"W x 5.5"D.

RCN RECORD SHOW CALENDAR

Calendar listings are free and on a space available basis. Unsolicited materials cannot be returned. Please contact conventions to verify information! Send calendar listings to jim@recordcollectornews.com.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6

Columbus, OH. Record, CD and Music Memorabilia Show. The Haimerl Center 1421 Morse Rd. $4. 3.am-4pm. 614-261-1585

New Hope, PA. New Hope Record and CD Riot!! New Hope Firehouse, 46 North Sugan Road $3. 10am-5pm. 914-948-2674

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. Free

Denver, CO Denver Record Collectors Fall Expo 2010. Red Loin Hotel SE 3200 S Parker Rd Aurora, Co 80014 $2. 10am-4pm. 303-238-0433

Orlando, FL. Orlando Record and CD Show. Central Florida Fairgrounds, 4603 W Colonial Dr. $3. 10am-4pm. 352-665-0259

Grand Rapids, MI. Grand Rapids Record and CD Show. Radisson Grand Rapids Riverfront. 270 Ann St NE 49504. $2. 11am-5pm. 616-516-5199

Minneapolis, MN MSP Music Expo. Ramada Plaza Minneapolis, 1330 Industrial Boulevard NE $3. 10am-4pm. 651-373-0065

St Louis, MO. St Louis Record and CD Show. American Czech Hall 4690 Lansdowne. $2. 10am-3:30pm. 314-821-9121

Raleigh, NC. Record and CD Show. Holiday Inn, 1-440 Beltline. Free. 10am-5pm. 478-737-0668

Rochester NY. The Bop Shop Record Show. 274 N Goodman St Rochester NY 14607. Free. 10am-5pm. 585-271-3354

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 13

Santa Cruz, CA KZSC Ultimate Music Sale. UC Santa Cruz Merrill College Cultural Center. Free. 10am-3pm. 510-289-7784

Covina, CA. The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society (laocas.com) presents the biggest dealer event of the year with an afternoon of eight high-end manufacturer's representatives at Sunny's Home Video and Music Systems, 1370 E. Cypress Street Suite D, Covina, CA, 91724. 1-5pm. Manufacturer demonstrations include Wilson Audio, Ayre Acoustics, Boulder, T+A, Rega, Dynaudio, Spiral Groove, and Transparent Cables. Raffle including a hand made custom prize by Alex at WyWire. Lunch served. Free parking. New Members, Guests, and visitors welcome. Sunny's Home Video and Music Systems, 626-966-6259 E-Mail: sunnyhtms@gmail.

Wayne, NJ. The Secord Saturday Record and CD Show. Firehouse, 97 Parish Dr. (@ Route 23 & 2025). $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14

San Francisco, CA KUSF Rock n' Swap! McLaren Hall, USF Campus. $3. 1 0am-3pm. 415-386-5873

Boise, ID. 3rd Annual Boise Record Show and Swap. The Linen Building, 1402 W. Grove Street. $3. 10am-6pm. 208-869-0485

Portland, ME. Main Record and CD Collectors Show. Howard Johnson convention Center. $5. 9am-2pm. 978-504-9068

Roseville, MI. Metro Detroit Record Show. VFW Hall 25671 Gratiot Ave. $3. 10am-4pm. 568-759-5133

Milwaukee, WI. Milwaukee Vinyl Record Show. Best Western Milwaukee Airport Hotel 5105 S. Howell Ave. $2. 10am-3pm. 920-733-5076

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 20

Alsip, IL. Record Collectors Show. Double Tree Hotel, 5000 W. 127th St. $3. 9am-3pm. 773-585-6254

Bloomfield Hills, MI. Bloomfield Hills Masonic Hall Record-CD Show. 37357 Woodward Ave. $3. 10am-3pm. 586-873-9832

New York City, NY. The New York City Record and CD Show Holliday Inn 440 W. 57th Street. $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 21

Cromwell, CT. Cromwell Record and CD Riot! Cromwell Crowne Plaza, 100 Berlin Road. $3. 9am-2:30pm. 914-948-2674

Hillside, IL. Chicagoland Record and CD Collectors Show. Best Western, Chicago Hillside. 4400 Frontage Rd. Hillside IL. $3. 10am-3pm. 630-898-1533

Massapequa, NY The Long Island Music Lover's Faire. American Legion, 66 Veterans Blvd & Broadway (Southern State Exit 305). $5. 10am-3pm. 973-209-60674

Indianapolis, IN. Alpha Music collectors Convention. Ramada Inn, I-465 and Pendleton Pike. $3. 10am-3pm. 317-882-3378

Roseville, MI. Roseville Masonic Hall Record and CD Show. Masonic Hall, 27151 Gratiot Ave, Roseville, MI 48066. $3. 10am-3pm. 586-873-9832

Fairview Park, OH. Northeast Ohio Record And CD Show. American Legion Hall, 22001 Brookpark Rd. $3. 10am-4pm. 440-865-4301

Seattle, WA. Lake City Record Show. 12531 28th N.E. Free. 10am-4pm. 206-850-1588

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28

Buena Park, CA Greater Orange County Record Show. UFCW Hall – 8530 Stanton Ave. $3. 10am*3pm. 626-963-9717

Fort Wayne, IN Fort Wayne Record and CD Collectors Show. Franke Park Zoo Pavilion #1 3411 Sherman Blvd. Free 11am-5pm. 574-329-1483

SATURDAY DECEMBER 4

Tustin, CA. The Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society Presents An Afternoon With Robert Harley, Editor of The Absolute Sound, at Digital Ear in Tustin from noon to 5pm. Robert will hold three 45-minute sit-down question-and-answer seminars at 1pm, 2:30pm, and 4pm. Robert will also be available all afternoon to answer individual questions and to sign copies of the new fourth edition of The Complete Guide to High-End Audio. This event is the world-premier of the new fourth edition of The Complete Guide to High-End Audio, and Robert will be happy to personally inscribe a copy to you. Complementary refreshments and light snacks will be served. The Digital Ear is located at 17602 Seventeenth St. Suite 106, Tustin, CA 92780. Seating at the seminars is limited, so please RSVP to The Digital Ear events@digitalear.com today!!!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 5

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. Free

Des Moines, IA. Des Moines Music Collectors Show. Holiday Inn 1050 6th Ave. $1. 10am-4pm. 515-284-1401

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Woburn, MA Greater Boston Record and CD Collectors Show. Best Western Hotel. 1 Ranin Rd. $5. 9am-3pm. 978-504-9068

Kalamazoo, MI. Kalamazoo Record and CD Collectors Show. Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake St. County Center Room Band C Free. 11am-5pm. 574-329-1483

Allentown, PA. The Fall Record, CD, DVD music expo. Merchants Square Mall 1901 S 12th St. $3. 10am-4pm. 610-530-7606

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

Culver City, CA. The West Side Record Show. Veterans Memorial Teen Center 4117 Overland Ave. Tons of free parking. General admission 10am-3pm $5. Early Bird 8am-10am $10. 818-308-4695

Wayne, NJ. The Second Saturday Record and CD Show. Firehouse, 97 Parish Dr. $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067

SUNDAY DECEMBER 12

Los Angeles, CA. The Los Angeles Beat Swap Meet. Grandstar Jazz Club 943 N Broadway, LA CA 90021. 12 noon-9pm. Free with canned good. 714-404-7568

Newark, CA. The Newark Music Swap Meet. Newark Pavilion, 6430 Thornton Ave. $3. 8am-2pm. 408-263-5127

Lancaster, PA Pennsylvania Music Expo. Ramada Hotel and Conference Center, 521 Greenfield Road, Lancaster. Free. 9am-3pm. 717-898-1246

South Bend, IN. South Bend Record and CD Collectors Show. Comfort Suites, 52939 IN 933 Free. 11am-5pm. 574-329-1483

SATURDAY DECEMBER 18

New York City, NY. The New York Record and CD Show. Holiday Inn, 440 W 57th Street. $6. 10am-4pm. 973-209-6067

Bloomfield Hills, MI. Bloomfield Hills Masonic Hall Record and CD Show. 3757 Woodward Ave. $3. 10am-3pm. 586-873-9832

SUNDAY DECEMBER 19

Roseville, MI. Roseville Masonic Hall Record and CD Show. Masonic Hall, 27151 Gratiot Ave. $3. 10am-3pm. 586-873-9832

Appleton, WI. Fox Valley Vinyl Record Show. Capitol Center. 725 W. Capitol Dr. $2. 10am-3pm. 920-733-5076

SUNDAY DECEMBER 26

Milwaukee Wi. Milwaukee MusicFest. American Service Hall, 5101 West Oklahoma Ave. $3. 10am-4pm. 847-409-9656

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